



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) decreased two-tenths of a percentage point from December 2003 to January 2004 while *Total Employment* gained almost 1,200 persons over the month and the number of unemployed persons decreased by 140, as seen in Northeast Idaho Table 1. Increases in the unemployment rates of both Butte and Bingham Counties were counteracted by decreases in both Bonneville and Jefferson Counties. Year-over-year, the unemployment rate in the LMA decreased five-tenths of a percentage point as *Total Employment* increased by almost 1,600 and the number of unemployed decreased by 400. All four counties experienced decreases in unemployment rates compared to December 2003. The unemployment rate for Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, decreased four-tenths of a percentage point over the month and year-over-year.

Of the remaining six area counties not included in the LMA, all showed year-over-year unemployment rate decreases with the exception of Clark County, which remained the same. Madison County had the lowest unemployment rate at 1.7 percent while Custer County showed the highest rate at 6.8 percent. The average unemployment rate for all nine counties in Northeast Idaho was 3.4 percent in January 2004, 1.4 percentage points lower than the state's rate of 4.8 percent and 2.2 percentage points lower than the national rate of 5.6 percent.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs decreased by 1,660 in the LMA over the month with the largest losses occurring in *Construction* and *Retail Trade*, each losing 480 jobs. This is to be expected at a time that *Retail* ends its big holiday season and winter deepens, with weather halting many *Construction* jobs. *Wholesale Trade* is the only industry to show an increase (30 jobs) over the month. Year-over-year, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 1,340 jobs. Larger gains were noted in *Professional & Business Services* (520 jobs), *Educational & Health Services* (440 jobs), *Retail Trade* (310 jobs), and *Construction* (300 jobs). The largest decrease was

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	Jan 2004*	Dec 2003	Jan 2003	% Change From Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	85,300	84,280	84,130	1.4	1.2
Unemployment	2,960	3,100	3,360	-11.9	-4.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.5	3.7	4.0		
Total Employment	82,340	81,180	80,770	1.9	1.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	83,510	83,690	82,330	1.4	-0.2
Unemployment	3,630	3,160	4,020	-9.7	14.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	3.8	4.9		
Total Employment	79,880	80,530	78,320	2.0	-0.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	63,820	65,480	62,480	-2.5	2.1
Goods-Producing Industries	9,140	9,630	9,450	-5.1	-3.3
Natural Resources & Mining	50	60	50	-16.7	0.0
Construction	4,340	4,820	4,040	-10.0	7.4
Manufacturing	4,750	4,750	5,360	0.0	-11.4
Food Manufacturing	2,760	2,740	3,040	0.7	-9.2
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	260	260	250	0.0	4.0
Machinery Manufacturing	400	400	450	0.0	-11.1
Other Manufacturing	1,330	1,350	1,620	-1.5	-17.9
Service-Providing Industries	54,680	55,850	53,010	-2.1	3.2
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	15,070	15,550	14,510	-3.1	3.9
Wholesale Trade	5,180	5,150	4,980	0.6	4.0
Retail Trade	8,070	8,550	7,760	-5.6	4.0
Utilities	120	120	110	0.0	9.1
Transportation	1,700	1,730	1,660	-1.7	2.4
Information	910	930	920	-2.2	-1.1
Financial Activities	2,170	2,170	2,110	0.0	2.8
Professional & Business Services	11,750	11,960	11,230	-1.8	4.6
Educational & Health Services	6,650	6,660	6,210	-0.2	7.1
Leisure & Hospitality	5,000	5,290	4,900	-5.5	2.0
Other Services	2,030	2,080	2,290	-2.4	-11.4
Government Education	5,050	5,080	5,040	-0.6	0.2
Government Administration	6,050	6,130	5,780	-1.3	4.7

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

noted in *Manufacturing* (610 jobs) in which *Food Manufacturing* and *Other Manufacturing* shared almost equal losses.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Annual Labor Force Data Comparisons

According to annual benchmarked numbers for 2002 and 2003, eight of the nine counties in Northeast Idaho experienced increases in *Total Employment* from 2002 to 2003. Bonneville County's *Civilian Labor Force* increased 2.2 percent over the year (1,070 people), now at 49,834. *Total Unemployed* decreased by 82 people while *Total Employment* increased by 1,153, with an accompanying decrease in the unemployment rate from 3.6 percent to 3.3 percent. Bonneville County ranks fourth in the state for *Total Employment* growth on an average basis from 2002 to 2003 with only Twin Falls, Bannock, and Nez Perce Counties ranking higher. Custer County added 275 people in *Total Employment* and ex-

perienced a decrease of 1.7 percentage points in the unemployment rate—a reflection of economic development, which has become a priority in the county. Teton County followed with a *Total Employment* growth of 193 and a decrease in the unemployment rate of one-tenth of a percentage point. Next is Lemhi County with a *Total Employment* growth of 166 and a decrease in unemployment rate of six-tenths of a percentage point. Madison County showed a growth of 154 in *Total Employment* and decreased one-tenth of a percentage point in the unemployment rate. Jefferson County showed *Total Employment* growth of 143 with three-tenths of a percentage point unemployment rate decrease. Butte and Clark Counties had minimal employment growth, while Fremont County was the only county to show a decrease in *Total Employment* (32 people). Butte County was the only county in Northeast Idaho to show an annual increase in the unemployment rate (five-tenths of a percentage point increase to 4.8 percent) as INEEL layoffs have affected some residents in 2003. Butte County only showed an increase of nine people in total unemployment, but because the county has such a small *Civilian Labor Force*, it does not take a large numerical change to become noticeable in a percent change. As a whole, Northeast Idaho gained 2,076 people in *Total Employment* and lost 145 people in total unemployment over the year. The *Civilian Labor Force* for 2003 was 89,351.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- Seventeenth Street in Idaho Falls is the site of two projects within a block of each other. The former Kenny Rogers Roasters location that has been unoccupied will be reopening in a few months as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Remodeling is now underway and the new location will give KFC additional space for seating and parking, along with an easier entrance from the busy Seventeenth Street than its current location, which is a quarter mile away on the same street. Just across the street, Lowe's is still under construction as the town watches heavy equipment lift and place large metal beams for structural support. The business could potentially open by summer, although an anticipated opening date hasn't been announced.
- The end of East Twenty-Fifth Street is about to change with the addition of a strip mall. Chicago-based General Growth Properties, which owns the Grand Teton Mall, is constructing the new strip mall located behind Porter's and the unoccupied United Furniture Warehouse. The vacant building will be torn down to give visibility to the strip mall. Ross Dress for Less and Best Buy are the first announced retailers for the space. Ross specializes in apparel, accessories, and footwear for all genders and ages. Best Buy specializes in selling electronics, computers, entertainment software, and appliances.
- Little Miracles Childcare and Preschool Center moved from its Broadway Avenue location to Taylor Crossing on the River, 866 Milligan Road, where it now enjoys

4,800-square feet of new space. Owner Nancy Franco is using high tech to keep her clients satisfied. An Internet day care web cam allows parents to use their personal and secure password to access cameras so they can see their children at any time of the day from a computer Internet connection. The center includes a large indoor playground; another large outdoor playground is to be installed soon. Background checks are conducted on all employees and all are CPR certified. Hours are 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. weekdays, and Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The number is 528-8577.

- Woodbury Corporation has purchased over 90 acres of property at the southeast corner of Hitt and Sunnyside Roads in Ammon. A house and out buildings will be removed for the corporation to develop the land. Because this location is only a quarter of a mile from Edwards Cinemas, it will be prime commercial property.

Teton County

- Teton Valley finally has its own radio station. Unable to get good reception due to its location between the Tetons and the Big Hole Mountains, the county has virtually been without music until Ted Austin Jr. began operating KCHQ at 102.1 FM (Q102) in Driggs in mid-February. The station is accessible from Teton, Fremont, and Madison Counties. It will feature country music, which was what residents indicated as their music preference in a poll that was conducted in all three counties. Austin has been involved with radio since the 1970s when his father founded KIGO and KADQ. Although Austin sold both of these in the 1980s, he repurchased both between 1987 and 1999 and sold them again in 2002. He has been working on making KCHQ operational since 1997. Dave Plourde, the new director and operations manager, is already known by many as the voice from Rexburg's KADQ where he was the station manager since the 1980s until it was sold in 2002. He has worked in the radio business in Idaho, Colorado, and Oklahoma since the early 1970s. Both Austin and Plourde are excited to have the station up and running.
- Bergmeyer Manufacturing in Diggs was awarded a \$500,000 state grant to help purchase state-of-the-art design software and computer-controlled woodworking equipment. The money is part of the Idaho Rural Initiative. President Mori Bergmeyer anticipates doubling his workforce over the next three years, as production will increase with the new equipment. The company was founded in 1993 and makes custom wood furniture.

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